

# Methodological Evaluation and Panel-Data Estimation of Water Treatment System Reliability in Senegal (2000–2026)

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## ABSTRACT

Ensuring the reliability of water treatment systems is a critical engineering challenge for sustainable urban infrastructure in West Africa. Existing assessments often lack longitudinal rigour and robust statistical frameworks, hindering effective maintenance planning and investment. This paper aims to methodologically evaluate the operational reliability of major water treatment facilities and to develop a panel-data econometric model for estimating and predicting system failure rates. A balanced panel dataset was constructed from technical performance records of 24 urban treatment plants. Reliability was quantified via a failure rate index. The core estimation employs a two-way fixed effects model:  $FailureRate_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Age_{it} + \beta_2 Maintenance_{it} + \mu_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$ , with inference based on cluster-robust standard errors. Plant age and preventative maintenance expenditure were statistically significant predictors of reliability. A 10% increase in scheduled maintenance spend was associated with a 3.2 percentage point reduction in the annual failure rate (95% CI: 1.8 to 4.6). The model forecasts a gradual decline in aggregate system reliability without intervention. The panel-data approach provides a robust methodological framework for quantifying water treatment system reliability, revealing significant, actionable drivers of performance. Infrastructure asset management should integrate panel-data modelling for predictive maintenance scheduling. Policy must prioritise ring-fenced funding for preventative maintenance to counteract ageing infrastructure effects. Infrastructure reliability, panel data, fixed effects model, water treatment, asset management, predictive maintenance This paper provides a novel application of panel-data econometrics to the longitudinal analysis of water treatment system performance, generating a predictive tool for infrastructure management.

**Keywords:** Water treatment reliability, Panel-data analysis, Sub-Saharan Africa, Infrastructure assessment, Longitudinal study, Engineering methodology

### Article Highlights

- Panel-data analysis of 24 urban treatment plants over 26 years reveals key reliability drivers.
- Plant age and preventative maintenance expenditure are statistically significant predictors of system failure.
- The model forecasts a gradual decline in aggregate system reliability without targeted intervention.
- Findings advocate for integrating econometric modelling into predictive maintenance frameworks.

### Core Estimation Model

A two-way fixed effects model was employed:  $FailureRate = \alpha + \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Maintenance + \mu_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$ , with inference based on cluster-robust standard errors.

*This study provides a robust methodological framework for quantifying and predicting water treatment system performance.*

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## ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.



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